

Book reviews

Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (BMT 19). By C. S. NICOL. 1976. 24 colour slides. Baillière Tindall, London. (£9.10)

It is 3 years since the publication of the booklet of slides illustrating the common lesions found in patients with syphilis, gonorrhoea, and chancroid. This companion booklet follows the same pattern and contains 24 slides illustrating common lesions of the other sexually transmitted diseases. The conditions shown are lymphogranuloma venereum, granuloma inguinale, non-specific urethritis, Reiter's disease, trichomoniasis, candidosis, scabies, pediculosis, genital herpes, genital warts, and genital molluscum contagiosum.

The choice of subject matter is on the whole excellent and the definition and colour reproduction are of the same high standard as in the first booklet. The slides are mounted in plastic mounts which is an improvement on the slim cardboard mounts of those in the earlier booklet.

As in the first booklet there is a short account of each condition, and a description of each slide.

Although some of the conditions illustrated are common it may be difficult to persuade patients to have their genitals photographed, and photographic departments may have problems in providing the rapid service desirable for some outpatients with lesions which resolve rapidly with modern therapy. This collection will, therefore, provide a very useful nucleus to any slide collection.

Conditions such as granuloma inguinale are not often seen in some areas so this collection will also be valuable additions to established collections.

The reviewer of the first booklet recommended that everyone working in this subject who is responsible for seminars, discussion groups, and lectures should own a set. This is equally true of this second booklet which can be thoroughly recommended.

R. N. Thin

Promiscuity. By MICHAEL SCHOFIELD. 1976. Pp. 253. Gollancz, London (£6.50)

Michael Schofield is a well known writer on sexual behaviour. In this book he discusses at length the meaning of the term promiscuity without offering any satisfactory definition. One has to read to page 37 before he starts to consider the meaning of the term and by then the different contexts in which it appears indicate several meanings.

All venereologists will agree with some of what he says about venereal diseases. None will disagree with his pleas for more funds for improved clinics and more research although many would disagree that it is fear of promiscuity that has retarded developments in this field. Unfortunately he does not offer any simple solutions to help us to obtain funds.

Many venereologists would disagree with other comments about our subject. 'V.D.' is frequently used as if it was one disease. Contradictory statements are made concerning the causes underlying recent increases in disease rates. Many important statements are not supported by references, some references are too vague, and a

reference in a health education journal for 1963 is used to support a statement that the best laboratory examinations miss about 20 per cent. of female infections (this presumably means infections in females). One feels that the author would have done better to obtain specialist advice.

No doubt the title will ensure that the book will sell. While it is important for venereologists to know what their patients are reading one cannot recommend that scarce funds be used to buy a copy for every departmental library.

R. N. Thin

Writing Scientific Papers in English. By MAEVE O'CONNOR and F. PETER WOODFORD. 1975. Pp. 108. Ciba Foundation, Elsevier, Excerpta Medica, Amsterdam. (£4.00)

This book should be read by everyone aspiring to write a scientific paper, and even experienced authors can learn from it. A copy should be kept in the library of every department where scientific writing is encouraged. The planning, preparing, writing, revising, and typing of papers are all covered. As the authors state, a neat, clean, accurately typed article on good quality paper with a carefully laid out title page will simplify the work of editors and referees. Advice is also given on responding to editors' queries and on correcting proofs.

Two series of companion booklets will be available, one for special language groups and the other for different scientific disciplines.

R. N. Thin

VD, A Guide for Nurses and Counsellors. By BARBARA M. MORTON, R.N., B.S. 1976. Pp. 275, illus. Little, Brown, Boston, Mass. (\$8.95; £5.40)

This small text book is intended as a guide for nurses and counsellors. It is obviously aimed at a North American audience and the author does not restrict herself to the classical venereal diseases but also considers many sexually transmitted infections. As one would expect, in any book that is written by a venereal disease epidemiologist, treatment and prevention occupy a much larger proportion of the book than clinical aspects of disease.

The statistics used are those which are applicable to the American scene. It is encouraging to see the author comment upon the value of gonorrhoea epidemiology and to state that contact investigation in relation to gonorrhoea is becoming more intensive in many areas. Emphasis is also placed upon the asymptomatic male in the spread of gonorrhoea. The section on the 'venereal disease and the law', whilst interesting, has limited relevance to the situation in the United Kingdom. The selected reading list is quite comprehensive and the glossary of both slang and medical terms shows an awareness of the problems of communication between doctor and patient.

In conclusion, this is an interesting book which would be of value to both social health workers and nursing staff.

J. R. W. Harris